A Vindication of every Free-mans liber-tie; against all Arbitrary power and Government.

OR,

A Letter of WILLIAM LARNER *Priſoner, to Sir* HENRY VANE junior, *a Parliament man: Wherein is ſet forth his unjuſt Impriſonment, and cruell hard dealings towards the ſaid* William Larner.

HONOURED SIR,

IT is not unknown unto you, my ſuffering condition being in ſome meaſure ſet forth unto you, in my Letter of the 3d. of *April* laſt paſt, which I ſent you then; I expected according to your undertaking and promiſe, you would have done ſomewhat whereby I might either have been freed from theſe my bands, or otherwiſe brought to triall, according to Law, and not thus to have ſuffered me to languiſh in priſon, as many more do. The Houſe of Commons have declared, that they will not exerciſe any Arbitrary power, or ſuffer it to be done by any other, but according to the fundamentall Lawes of this Kingdome, Juſtice and right to be done to every man without reſpect of perſons: Beſides, you have bound your ſelves by Oath unto, and by a Law confirmed the *Great Charter of Liberties*, for the preſervation whereof we have adventured all, in aſſiſting you againſt the oppugners thereof.

But now contrary to your Oathes, Proteſtations, Lawes and Statutes of this Kingdome, am I ſtill detained in priſon, to the ruining and utter undoing of my wife and family, all means of ſubſiſtence and livelihood being taken from us, yet you ſeem regardleſſe of it, as if it were a matter that concerned you nothing. Sir, I pray you to conſider, that if the oppreſſions and ſeverall grievances of men in particular be not redreſſed, what avails your generall Laws? If you that are Members of the Houſe, refuſe to preſent our grievances and juſt complaints to

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the Houſe, what hopes can we have to receive any comfort or relief there, whatſoever good that Honourable Houſe intends us? So as indeed you that neglect or refuſe to open your mouths (being bound by Oath and the duty of your place thereunto for us) in preſenting our Petitions, conditions and ſufferings, to that Honourable Houſe, may you not be truly ſaid to be ſuch as are the betrayers of our Liberties, covertly doing more diſſervice to the Parliament and State, then the Enemy that openly fighteth againſt them: The Enemy diſcovers themſelves (by oppugning the Laws and our liberties) what they be; but you whileſt you retard the delivering up of our complaints, thinking the fault to be in the Houſe, cauſes us to conceive hard thoughts againſt them, brings us into a diſlike of their government, and thus you do the work of the Enemy; and by thus neglecting us, do the Parliament more harm, and in time (if not provided for) will prove more dangerous then all the machinations and attempts of the adverſary: For, the people begin already to look upon you, as men carrying on your own deſignes and peculiar and private intereſts, under the Veil of publike pretences, and that your care is how to get great Offices and places for your ſelves and your friends, and while you ſuffer us the Commons to be ſpoiled of all, to lie in Priſons, and undergo all miſeries, wants and extremities, you be nothing troubled thereat, ſo long as your ſelves fare well; this is utterly a fault in many of you, of no little blemiſh and ſhame for you, and cannot be imputed to be little leſſe then meer madneſſe, in thus exaſperating our ſpirits, and alienating our affections from you, and yet to ſtand upon ſo high tearms with the contrary party.

Till you by actions manifeſt, as by your words you have declared to the world, to be the men you profeſſe and would ſeem to be, I and others ſhall doubt that you intend nothing leſſe then our good, or peace. For hitherto you have ſworn and proteſted, but all as yet in vain: For theſe our Bonds and Impriſonments ſhew them to be (hitherto) emptineſſe and Winde; and if this be continued, theſe courſes will make the people hate you, and as you have been regardleſſe of their burthens and complaints, ſo (I fear) when you ſhall expect and moſt need their help, they will diſſert you.

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Sir,

Sir, are we a free-born people, or are we born ſlaves? What I pray you, makes you to differ? who brought you into that Houſe? whether your own greatneſſe and power, or the peoples love and Election? If by the people, how comes it then to paſſe, that their grievances and complaints be ſo little minded, and themſelves ſo contemptible in your eyes? (as if meer ſlaves:) Beware, leſt loſing and neglecting them, you loſe not your ſelves: Excuſe my plainneſſe and freedome; for if I hold my peace, I ſee deſtruction; by putting my ſelf forth this way, I may happily ſave you and my ſelf, in awaking you out of this drowſineſſe, careleſneſſe (of our common liberty) with which you are ſo deeply overtaken.

You ſee in what condition you have brought us, even into a condition worſe then ſlavery, yea, worſe then death; for in death ſorrow is not remembred; bread is provided for the ſlave, but we your priſoners (loaden with ſorrow, broken with affliction) mewed up in your priſon houſes, oftentimes wiſh for death and cannot finde it, nor any bread you provide for us, hunger-ſtarved men, and we pine in priſons, not pitied, not lamented.

Sir, if I have offended, if I have tranſgreſſed any known law, I then crave the benefit of the Law, the liberty of a Free-man; that, either according to the ſame I may be tried for my juſtification or condemnation, or otherwiſe; that I may be holden no longer from my charge and * calling, in this my tormenting Priſon.

* For if I provide not for my family, I am worſe then an infidell: but wo be to them that are the cauſes thereof.

You have confirmed *Magna Charta*, and many other good Lawes ſince made in favour of our Liberties, and yet unrepealed; which if they were duly put in execution, I then ſhould not doubt but to come forth out of priſon, to the confuſion of the faces of ſuch as proſecutes, and maliciouſly informs againſt me: In the beginning of this Parliament you brought us out of Priſons, approved our ſtandings and ſufferings againſt the Exorbitant and Arbitrary power and Government of the Starcham-chamber, Counceſl Table, and high Commiſſion Court. Theſe your incouragements made us bold, did you finde us ungrateful? We are the ſame men ſtill, we have the ſame affections to you, and if by you we may receive one *Ordinance, viz.* The Ordinance

of *Iuſtice*, then aſſure your ſelves, we to our abilities will not be wanting to you, but will be ever ready to ſpend and be ſpent for you: Thus hoping you will at length anſwer the expectation of a Free-man of *England* wrongfully impriſoned, and no longer adde to the ſins of the *Prelates*, to the increaſing of wrath, by impriſoning and unjuſtly tormenting, *juſt and free perſons*. In expectation whereof, Sir I am, and will remain

From the Priſon in Maiden-lane *this 3. of* June, 1646.

Yours in all due reſpects to his power:
WILL: LARNER.

To the Right honourable, the LORDS aſſembled in Parliament.

The humble Petition of Hellen Larner, *in the behalf of her huſband* William Larner, *and their two ſervants*, John Larner, *and* Jane Hale.

Sheweth,

THat your Petitioners husband, hath now ſtood committed more then 8. Weeks, and their ſervants in the Fleet four Weeks, upon a falſe ſuggeſtion of *Hunſcots* (the Stationers Beadle) a malicious adverſary of your poor petitioners husband.

Your Petitioner moſt humbly beſeecheth your Honours, to commiſerate our deplorable condition, whoſe meanes of livelihood, depends ſolely upon their calling and liberty, and therefore according to your noble clemencie, to be pleaſed to aſſigne unto them, their liberty out of Goal, free of all priſon fees:

And your Petitioner as bound, ſhall pray, &c.

WILLIAM LARNER.